Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): A method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network, wherein the packet-switching communications network includes at least one subscriber, the method comprising the steps of:

controlling a concentrator interface~~,~~ via a network element, ~~a concentrator interface~~ using at least one connecting unit such that the network element makes resources available to ~~it~~said concentrator interface;

transmitting signaling data ~~for subscriber signaling of the subscriber~~ between at least one ~~packed~~ packet control unit of the network element and the connecting unit of the network element via a message distribution system of the network element;

converting the signaling data of the network element by the packet control unit into signaling packets of the packet-switching communications network and vice versa; ~~and~~

~~transmitting the signaling packets between the packet control unit and the subscriber~~

exchanging the signaling packets of the subscriber of the packet-switching communications network between subscribers and the network element using a physical interface of one of the packet control unit and the message router system of the network element; and

transmitting the user data using the network element when there is a connection between the subscriber and a second subscriber.

Claim 2. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1,

Claim 3. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the steps of:

administering and operating the subscriber in the network element as a subscriber which is connected using the concentrator interface; and

using the resources made available to the concentrator interface for the subscriber.

Claim 4. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein functions of one of a main line and an extension are available to the subscriber in the network element.

Claim 5. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the concentrator interface is administered and operated as at least one of a V5.2 interface, a TR303 interface, a V93 interface and a V95 interface.

Claim 6. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

bidirectionally transmitting, via one of PCM connections and SDH connections of the concentrator interface, user data to an interface unit which converts the user data between a format which is customary in the packet-switching communications network and a format which is customary in the circuit-switching communications network.

Claim 7. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 6, wherein the interface unit is a media gateway which converts the user data bidirectionally between packet format and TDM format.

Claim 8. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

controlling the interface unit via line trunk groups of the network element which control the concentrator interface.

Claim 9. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

characterizing the concentrator interface in a database of the network element as a concentrator interface for connecting subscribers of the packet-switching communications network.

Claim 10. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

routing the subscriber in a database of the network element as a subscriber of the packet-switching communications network.

Claim 11. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 10, wherein the concentrator interface for connecting subscribers of the packet-switching communications network can be assigned only subscribers which are subscribers of the packet-switching communications network.

Claim 12. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of functions of the concentrator interface for connecting subscribers of the

packet-switching communications network which are not required are deactivated, and messages of the functions are suppressed in the network element.

Claim 13. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein subscribers of the circuit-switching communications network are assigned to only one concentrator interface of the network element which is provided for connecting subscribers of the circuit-switching communications network.

Claim 14. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 2, wherein assignment of the subscribers to at least one the concentrator interfaces of the network element and connecting units of the network element is carried out in a database of the switching office using an operator interface of the network element.

Claim 15. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

actuating, via the network element, a plurality of concentrator interfaces to which a respective plurality of subscribers can be assigned.

Claim 16. (canceled).

Claim 17. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

assigning a call number to the subscriber in the network element, wherein the subscriber in the packet-switching communications network has a subscriber address, and the assignment between the subscriber address and the call number is made using a control unit.

Claim 18. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 16, wherein the control unit is a data processing system which is assigned to the network element.

Claim 19. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the subscriber is administered as a subscriber with an ISDN basic access in the network element.

Claim 20. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 19, wherein the ISDN basic access is one of an ISDN basic access in point-to-point configuration or an ISDN basic access in point-to-multipoint configuration.

Claim 21. (canceled):

Claim 22. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

transmitting the user data directly between the subscribers using the packet-switching communications network when there is a connection between the subscriber and a further subscriber of the packet-switching communications network.

Claim 23. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the packet-switching communications network is an Internet-protocol-based network.

Claim 24. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method for processing signaling data and for controlling connections in a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 1,

wherein the signaling of the subscriber is carried out in accordance with one of the H.323 Standard and the SIP Standard.

Claim 25. (currently amended): A network element for processing signaling data and for controlling connections of subscribers of a packet-switching communications network, comprising:

a concentrator interface which is controlled using at least one connecting unit of the network element, the concentrator interface making available resources of the network element;

a packet-switching communications network with at least one subscriber;

a message router system of the network element having a physical interface; and

at least one packet control unit having a physical interface that~~which~~ connects ~~a~~ the message router system ~~of the network element~~ to the connecting unit, wherein signaling data for subscriber signaling ~~being~~ is transmitted between the packet control unit of the network element and the connecting unit of the network element via the message router system of the network element, and wherein the signaling data of the network element ~~being~~ is converted into signaling packets of the packet-switching communications network by the packet control unit, and vice versa, ~~and the signaling packets being transmitted between the packet control unit and the subscriber~~, and wherein signaling of the subscriber of the packet-switching communications network is exchanged between subscribers and the network element using a physical interference of one of the packet control unit and the message router system of the network element, and user data is transmitted using the network element when there is a connection between the subscriber and a second subscriber.

Claim 26. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The network element for processing signaling data and for controlling connections of subscribers of a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 25, wherein the network element contains both units of a conventional switching office of a line-switching communications network and at least one packet control unit.

Claim 27. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The network element for processing signaling data and for controlling connections of subscribers of a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 25, wherein the packet-switching communications network is an Internet-protocol-based network.

Claim 28. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The network element for processing signaling data and for controlling connections of subscribers of a packet-switching communications network as claimed in claim 25, wherein the signaling of the subscriber is carried out in accordance with one of the H.323 Standard and the SIP Standard.